

Panamá

I. Mixed Peoples of the Isthmian Republic

By Hamilton Fyfe

Author of "The Real Mexico," etc.

THE Republic of Panamá has about the same area as Ireland; it has a sparse population of less than 500,000 people of Spanish, Indian, and negro descent. Until 1903 these people were subjects of the Republic of Colombia, and never failed to take an active part in the many revolutions which disturbed that uneasy State. In 1903 they broke away and declared their independence.

For many years there had been discussion of projects for piercing the Isthmus of Panamá which connected South with Central America. De Lesseps, the famous French engineer, who planned and brought into being the Suez Canal, was ambitious for himself and his country that this other great enterprise should be French also. In 1881 a French company began work. But the obstacles in their way were too formidable. To begin with, the physical difficulties of the task had not been sufficiently considered. The isthmus had the reputation of being one of the most unhealthy spots on earth. Yellow fever, malaria, and other diseases were permanent plagues

in Panamá. Furthermore, the American Government looked on at what the company was doing with unconcealed suspicion and jealousy. The French were suspected of desiring to take and hold the isthmus. This would have infringed the Monroe Doctrine that no foreign Power must acquire territory on either of the American continents. There was also a feeling among the people of the United States that, if a canal was to be cut, it ought to be their business to cut it. So, before the work had got far, the American government intervened, and the enterprise was hung up.

Another French company, however,

at a later date continued to induce investors in France to subscribe for the completion of De Lesseps' grandiose design, which, in addition to promising large dividends, flattered their patriotic pride. Immense sums were raised by shady financiers, stories got about that they were stealing the money, investigation was at last ordered by the French government, and the Panamá scandal was revealed in all its ugliness. Senators and deputies were accused of taking bribes. Even ministers were



OPEN MARKET ON PANAMÁ BEACH
Pure-blooded natives, who have never been conquered nor permitted intermarriage, these San Blas Indians often come to Panamá city to trade bananas for cloth and gunpowder

Photo, Publishers' Photo Service



CAYUKA CARRYING BANANAS TO THE FRUIT MARKET OF GATUN

Cayuka is the name of the dug-outs fashioned by the Cholo and other Indian tribes of Panamá. Roughly hewn with machetes out of hard wood tree-trunks, they are heavy craft, which the dexterous natives can, nevertheless, pole and paddle at considerable speed, even against the current. Nearly all the fruit and other native produce is brought to market in cayukas along the waterways of Panamá

Photo, Publishers' Photo Service

shown to have soiled their hands by receiving hush-money. Some were sent to prison, including poor old De Lesseps, for whom everyone felt sorry, but the investors could not get their money back. It had all disappeared.

That was the end of the French attempt to pierce the isthmus which separated the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Next came the turn of the United States. Plans were drawn, the money was all ready, nothing remained save to come to agreement with the Colombian Republic. What the United States wanted was the control of a canal zone. The only question to be settled was: how much should be paid for this concession? The Colombian ministers higgled and haggled until, on November 3, 1903, Panamá suddenly proclaimed itself an independent State, was recognized by the United States on November 13, and on November 18

signed a treaty giving the American government all the powers it required for the making of the canal.

The Colombians asserted furiously that the revolution had been instigated and engineered by American energy and American dollars. This was hotly denied. What the truth of the matter was became known to a few, but has never been publicly revealed. Mr. Roosevelt was President at the time, and was credited with having cut the knot by using the weapon which lay nearest to his hand. Whether Panamá was pushed or not, the result was that the United States government received the right to control for ever a five-mile strip on either side of the canal, the coast-line of the canal zone and several islands commanding the entrance.

No time was wasted. The work was put in hand and the world was given a valuable lesson in thoroughness,

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administrative energy, the management of labour, and the fighting of disease. At first the construction of the canal and the government of the zone were entrusted to a commission of seven, with a civilian chairman. After a short period it was decided that the authority should have a military character. To be chairman of the commission and chief engineer President Roosevelt appointed Colonel Goethals. Under his severe, but just and sensible, administration, the work went forward rapidly, the workers were disciplined, yet remained content, the "most pestilential spot on earth" was turned into what the Americans called a "health resort."

This was not due so much to Colonel Goethals as to the chief sanitary officer, William Crawford Gorgas, who died in

London, July 5, 1920. He it was who resolved to prevent the spread of fever by getting rid of the mosquitoes which carried infection. He was an enthusiast, a man who, it was said, "would have spent the whole sum voted by Congress for the canal upon sanitation." He had many a struggle with Colonel Goethals, whose fault, if he had one, was that he kept too tight a hand over the money given him to spend.

"Is it worth while to spend so much to save the lives of a few niggers?" he was reported to have asked, with some impatience.

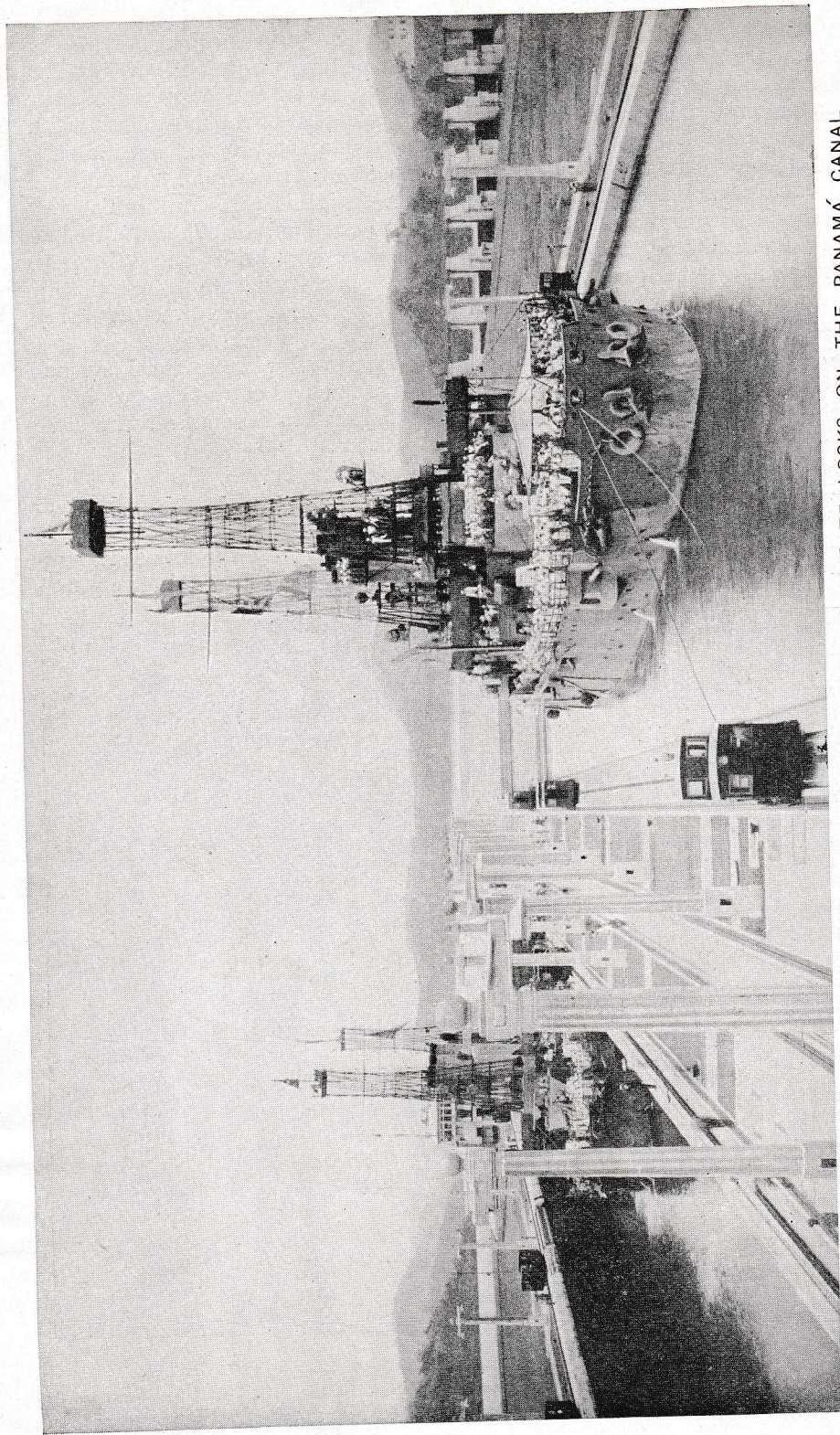
To which Colonel Gorgas replied: "That's not the point. We're going to spend it to save your life, sir."

The war against the anopheles mosquito which, having once bitten a person



RESCUE OF BABES IN THE WOOD BY A ZONE POLICEMAN

Invaluable service was rendered by the Canal Zone Police Force attached to the Civil Administration Department of the Isthmian Canal Commission. Well set up young Americans, almost all of military training, their multifarious duties among the polyglot community employed on the canal included census work, prevention of crime, and, on occasion, the recovery of children lost in the jungle



U.S. BATTLESHIPS PASSING THROUGH ONE OF THE HUGE DUPLICATE LOCKS ON THE PANAMA CANAL Gatun Lake, with an area of 125 square miles, eighty-five feet above sea level, is the practical solution of the problem of safeguarding the flood waters of the rivers in the canal zone. Ships coming from the Caribbean are lifted on to it by the gigantic three-stepped, two-flighted stairway at Gatun Lock, and at the other end are lowered in the Pedro Miguel Lock thirty feet to Miraflores Lake, whence the Miraflores Lock lowers them the further fifty-five feet to the sea-level on the Pacific side

Photo, U.S. Navy Department

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suffering from malaria, conveys infection to every person whom it bites thereafter, was carried on chiefly by three methods: first, the swamps and pools in which the mosquitoes lay their eggs were filled up wherever this was possible; secondly, the larvae which managed to get out of the eggs were attacked with a mixture warranted to kill; thirdly, the

reduce malaria almost to the vanishing point. The yellow fever carrier was exterminated also. The health of the canal zone community was excellent. At the same time equal pains were being taken to secure moral health. Colonel Goethals, following the fine tradition of the American army, was incorruptible himself, and he kept everyone



PEACEFUL CHIEFS OF THE ONCE WARLIKE TRIBES OF DARIEN

Indians of the Darien—the term vaguely applied to the eastern end of the Isthmus of Panamá—are descendants of the Carib race that had its cradle in the heart of South America. Formerly a ferocious and cannibal people, who fiercely resisted the Spanish invasion, they now live peacefully enough and have interbred freely with the immigrant black and white peoples on the coast

Photo, Consulate for Panamá

larvae which escaped this mixture and became mosquitoes were hunted down as soon as it was known that they were carriers of infection. Whenever a person was bitten and made it known to the health authorities, they searched out all the mosquitoes in the neighbourhood. They also isolated all malarial patients. Wire-netting guarded the doors and windows of all dwellings. If anyone heard the ping-g-g of the creature his duty was to ring up the Sanitary Department, just as one would inform the police upon hearing a burglar in the house. The effect of these measures was to

else so by giving them no chance to be corrupted. By the complete absence of anything like "graft" the parties of Congressmen who visited the canal works were as much astonished as they were by the magnitude of the "cuts," the enormous size of the lock-gates, and so on.

It was by personal rule that Colonel Goethals succeeded in keeping his community both orderly and satisfied. He adopted the method of the Eastern governor and made himself accessible to all who wanted advice or had grievances. Every Sunday morning he held an informal reception which everybody



SMILES AND SUNSHINE LIGHTEN LAUNDRY WORK AT COLÓN

As in many other lands, the rivers serve as public laundries for the natives of Panamá. In this group of women washing at Colón, the mixed blood of the population is clearly seen. In most, the strong African strain introduced with the negroes from the West Indies dominates their original Indian type, while others show Iberian grace, inherited from the Spanish conquerors

Photo, I. L. Maduro

could attend; tried disputes, settled quarrels, smoothed away difficulties. The words of a song written and sung heartily in the canal zone illustrated the confidence that the colonel's plan inspired:

If you have any cause to kick or feel disposed to howl,
If things ain't running just to suit and there's a chance to growl,
If you have any axe to grind or graft to shuffle through,
Just take it up to Colonel G., like all the others do.

See Colonel Goethals, see Colonel Goethals,
It's the only right and proper thing to do;
Just write a letter, or even better,
Arrange a little Sunday interview.

In 1914 the canal was opened to the ships of all nations for use on equal terms. Such use had been guaranteed by the United States in 1901, and though Congress passed an Act in 1912 giving privileges to American ships,

President Wilson refused to agree to a measure which broke the pledged word of the nation, and the Act was repealed. For some time after the opening of the canal there were falls of earth which caused anxiety as well as stoppages of traffic. In 1915-16 no ships passed through during a period of six months. Gloomy apprehensions began to find utterance. A number of engineers shook their heads and spoke as if the great work were doomed. Fortunately, the croakers have not up to the present time found any further justification for their little faith.

The length of the canal is fifty miles; vessels pass through it in ten hours. There are three sets of locks, the first to raise ships 85 feet, the other two to lower them to ocean level again. From this it will be understood that there was a hill in the way. At each end there are huge coal yards and oil stores, with the

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finest appliances for putting fuel of either kind on board.

What the canal does in the way of shortening voyages and cheapening freights is shown by this statement of distances by which voyages are reduced ; Liverpool to San Francisco, 6,000 miles ; Liverpool to Valparaiso, 1,400 miles ; Liverpool to Guayaquil, 5,000 miles ; Liverpool to Iquique, 2,800 miles ; New York to Wellington, N.Z., 5,700 miles ; New York to Sydney, 3,800 miles ; New York to Melbourne, 6,200 miles ; New York to Yokohama, 3,700 miles.

While the canal set an active current of business flowing through Panamá, the people of the peninsula drew little profit from the fact that their country had become a highway for the shipping of the world. Their climate disinclines

them to do any more work than is required to provide them with a living. Next to nothing is demanded of them in the way of national effort. They have no defence forces to pay for. The interest on the lump sum (£2,000,000) handed over, and the rent paid for the canal zone by the United States (£50,000 a year) cover a considerable part of their state expenditure, a fairly large proportion of which goes to education, not only for children in the free schools, but for the young men and women who are sent to European universities or technical colleges, owing to the lack of any such institutions on the spot.

If one watches the trans-shipping of cargoes which goes on in great volume at Colón and at Cristobal—the new



SPIGGOTY WOMEN. AT THE WASHTUB IN PANAMÁ CITY

Negro, Spanish, and Cholo Indian blood predominates in these women numbered from left to right, the bold-fronted creature in the centre showing many characteristics of the women of Spain, though darker-skinned than them. From the Panamanians' habit of replying "No spiggoty Inglis" when addressed in the early days, "Spiggoty" has become a slang term for the natives of Panamá

Photo, I. L. Maduro

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American port which adjoins the old one—one notices that the men working do not appear to be natives of the place. A great many of them are British negroes from the West Indies; very few are Panamanians. Out in the country there are natives working on coffee and rubber plantations or in banana groves; but they do not need to work hard, for the soil is so fertile as to bring forth its kindly fruits with very little persuasion. There are vast grasslands, too, for cattle pasture; there are forests full of timber that the world requires; but none of these industries is highly developed.

In the towns there are no industries at all. The "Panamá hats" are not made in Panamá, but in Ecuador, in Colombia. Trade and banking are

mostly in the hands of Chinese and Jews. Not many years ago German merchants and financiers were prominent in these directions, but they are not so prominent now. The drinking saloons which abound are generally American; the gambling houses belong for the most part to Chinese. These, it must in fairness to the local population be added, draw their profit almost entirely from the foolish stranger. The natives like a little "flutter"; indeed, this seems to be an element in their lives without which they could not exist. But they find their opportunity in the state lottery.

The episcopal see of Panamá is the oldest on the American continent. The cathedral once was, and is said by some to be still, immensely rich. The buccaneers who sailed from or put into the isthmus ports were induced to give largely of their ill-gotten gains by the hope that their crimes would in return be pardoned. The present cathedral, finished in 1760, was built at the cost of a bishop who was the son of a freed negro, a poor charcoal-burner, who lived to see his son a prelate and a power in the land.

There are other old churches in Panamá city and some traces of seventeenth-century Spain in the streets still, although the place has been Americanised, much to the benefit of the inhabitants' health.

There stand unbroken the old seawalls and fortifications which cost so much that a Spanish king said wittily they "ought to be visible from his palace in



GENTLENESS REPAID BY TRUST

Bird life teems in the isthmus of Panamá, many species as brilliant in hues as the tropical flowers that make the jungle an indescribable phantasmagoria of colour. The native women show much skill and patience in taming wild birds, notably the parakeets

Photo, Publishers' Photo Service



UNSOPHISTICATED WOMANHOOD OF THE PANAMANIAN INTERIOR

Of the native Indians of Panamá, only the San Blas people have preserved their ethnic purity. The rest, of whom this group is representative, have intermarried freely with every immigrant race, and have no tribal sentiment. In the country they lead a life of Arcadian simplicity, squatting where they please. The women wear little more than a scanty skirt, and the children go naked

Photo, Underwood Press Service

Madrid." Go up on these at the sunset hour or by moonlight, and you will be rewarded by a prospect steeped in beauty. In front lies the Pacific; on the right the mountains can be seen, the giants of the Cordillera; along the coast shine white sand beaches, relieved by the green of mangrove swamps.

Colón leaves no such pleasant memories. It is a place of sweltering heat, of fierce warm winds, which bend the coconut palms fringing the front. Standing in the same relation to the Panamá Canal as Port Said does to the Suez Canal, it has more than a little in common with the African town.

Panamá

II. The Story of its People & its Canal

By Percy F. Martin

Author of "Through Five Republics of South America," etc.

AT one time the name "Panamá" stood for pernicious fever, piracy, and perilous adventure; to-day it denotes the central meeting-place of the world's great transportation routes, and ranks probably as one of the healthiest tropical stations in existence.

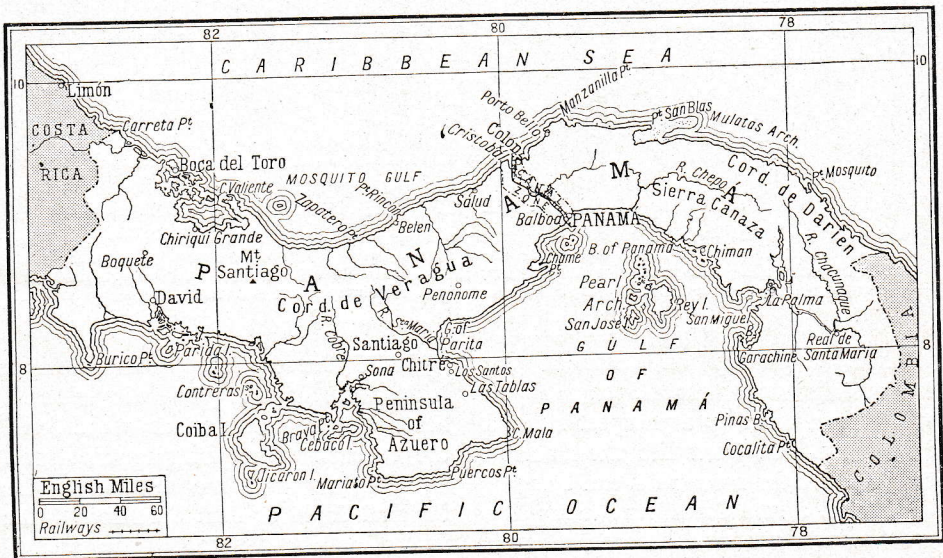
Mountains, irregular hills, a few rivers—now partially controlled by the great canal—swamps, and dense forests form the main physical features of the country. Scenically, it can compare with any other of the fair lands of Central America, while in regard to temperature it proves hardly more trying to the white man than any of its immediate neighbours. The indefatigable Columbus landed here in 1502—on his fourth voyage—but the actual discoverer of the isthmus was one Rodrigo Galvan de Bastidas. Panamá's then untouched wealth in minerals—especially gold—was soon discovered, and this, amassed in fabulous amounts by King Ferdinand's lieutenant, Diégo de Nicuesa, greatly enriched the crown of Spain until separation took place nearly three hundred years later (1821). The isthmus formed the scene of many a daring exploit by the merry men under Drake, Parker, and Morgan. Indeed, between 1595 and 1700, Panamá was attacked and sacked again and again,

Spain finding it difficult—and later on impossible—to communicate by this route with her other South American colonies.

Panamá formed the richest province of Colombia, but, owing to its distance from the Federal capital (Bogotá), it took little part in the various conflicts which distinguished the early days of the mother country's history, when it still formed part of the Venezuela, Ecuador, and New Granada Confederation.

In 1840 an independent State of the Isthmus was formed. This comprised Panamá and Veragua, first under Fábrega and then under the Venezuelan leader, Carreño. The new regime lasted, however, a very short while, and in 1831 Bolívar, the Liberator, was requested to convert Panamá into a separate State. But he advised, rather, reincorporation with Colombia. In 1855 Panamá became an autonomous State by act of the Colombian Congress; which then, repenting of its action, tried unsuccessfully to reclaim the province. When, in 1848, the Californian goldfields were discovered (some £300,000,000 in all were won from them), Panamá prospered exceedingly; by the isthmus all the precious metal was shipped to the United States and Europe.

Thirty-seven years later (1885) United States marines landed, nominally to



THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMÁ AND THE CANAL ZONE

PANAMÁ'S STORY

protect the transit of the isthmus between Colón and Panamá cities. Relations between Panamá and Colombia thereafter became worse. Many revolts took place, and in July, 1900, under the lead of Belisario Porras (who later became President of the new Republic upon two occasions, including the 1920 election), a desperate but unsuccessful attempt was made by the Liberal army to secure control of Panamá city.

Far different was the result of the revolt which is said to have been supported by the United States Government, an allegation warmly repudiated. It was said that, finding Colombia unwilling to sell her right over the canal zone of the isthmus for the price offered (£10,000,000), and unable to move the smaller State from its refusal, the United States sent emissaries to Panamá, and when rebellion broke out warships forcibly prevented any interference upon the part of the four hundred Colombian troops despatched from the capital. The independent Republic of Panamá was proclaimed November 3, 1903, and the American Government at once recognized it, inducing the British Government, a few months later, to do the same.

Since then political disturbances have seldom been allowed to make headway. At the first sign of trouble troops from the United States have stood in readiness to intervene. The interests of the world in the safety of the canal are real enough, and the United States, which stands

as voluntary custodian, as it was the triumphant constructor, of this great waterway, pleads these interests as sufficient justification for its attitude. An anti-American demonstration took place June 28, 1920, at Panamá city on account of the United States acquiring part of Tobago for the defence of the canal.

In 1919 there were changes in the diplomatic representatives of Great Britain and Panamá, Mr. Andrew Percy Bennett, C.M.G. (formerly British Consul at Zurich), being appointed to Panamá, and Señor Don Guillermo Andrevé to the Court of S. James's. Prosperity increased the country's balance of trade from a little more than \$2,000,000 (approximately £400,000) in 1903 to over \$15,000,000 (£3,000,000) in 1920.

In May, 1921, trouble broke out between Panamá and Costa Rica, the latter without warning occupying territory allotted to it by the "White Award," which, when made in 1916, was refused recognition by Panamá. The United States (which controlled the award) took the side of Costa Rica, and threatened Panamá with punishment unless it consented to resign the disputed territory peacefully. The American troops, however, were not allowed by the Panamanians to leave the canal-zone territory. Panamá has now appealed for moral support to Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil, and refuses to bow further to the dictation of the United States.

PANAMÁ: FACTS AND FIGURES

The Country

Forms connecting isthmus in the shape of a double curve, between South and Central America. Bounded north by Caribbean Sea, south by Pacific, east by Colombia, and west by Costa Rica. Western mountain chain forms watershed, and there are coastal ranges on the eastern curve. Short, swift rivers drain from hills to each coast. Numerous small ports along coasts. Inter-oceanic canal runs across narrowest part of isthmus, having on each side of it a neutral zone five miles wide. Rainfall abundant but country underpopulated and mainly undeveloped. Breadth of isthmus varies between 37 and 110 miles. Total area about 32,000 square miles with a population of some 450,000. Panamá has police force of about 800 officers and men, but no army or navy.

Government and Constitution

Panamá proclaimed its independence from Colombia in 1903. Constitution based on republican lines and provides for Chamber of Deputies with thirty-three members and a President elected for four years by direct voting. President assisted by Cabinet of five and three Vice-Presidents.

Commerce and Industries

Only small part of country agriculturally developed though soil fertile. Chief products bananas, coffee, cocoa, and rubber. Mahogany is found, and ipecacuanha, sarsaparilla, tobacco, and sugar cultivated. There are considerable

timber resources, and cattle do well. Mineral resources extensive. Turtle and pearl fishing carried on. In 1921 total imports amounted to £2,396,871, and exports, for same year, to £512,931. Standard coins the gold balboa and silver peso. Nominal value of balboa 4s. 2d., and of peso, 2s. 1d.

Communications

Total railway lines measure about 250 miles, of which large portion are privately owned. Telegraph cables run to Europe and North and South America. There are some one hundred post offices and forty telegraph offices. Chief port for provincial traffic outside canal zone is Boca del Toro.

Religion and Education

Principal religion Roman Catholicism, but all creeds tolerated. Canal territory mainly Protestant. About sixty parishes with some seventy Catholic churches and seventy priests, among whom are included Italians, French, and Spanish. Elementary education compulsory between ages of seven and fifteen. State maintains about 400 schools containing over 22,000 children with a staff of over 300. There are, besides, about a dozen private schools, and also a University. Large numbers of Panamanians educated with State aid in United States and Europe.

Chief Towns

Panamá, capital (estimated population 61,000), Colón (26,000), David, Santiago, Penonome, Los Santos, and Chitre.



SWEET MUSIC CHARMS INTERVALS OF LEISURE IN PANAMÁ

Music appeals strongly to the West Indian negroes, many of whom are employed by the industrial company developing the banana fields of Boca del Toro, Panamá. This pleasant-faced lad, a member of the crew of a fruit boat, is one of them, and he can pluck very charming music from the strings of his majorana, a home-made Panamanian variant of the Spanish guitar

Photo. Publishers' Photo Service



INDIAN BUCKS DRESSED FOR THE DANCE IN DARIEN

Gaiety does not enter largely into the life of the Indians of Panamá, but at feasts and dances they are sufficiently spectacular. Daubed with paint, crowned with headbands, or with large crowns of painted wood, and wearing yards of gaudy beads draped about shoulders and waist, they dance to an accompaniment of throbbing drums and shrill reed flutes, until compelled to stop by exhaustion